

NCA
VOC FOR PGM/FN
BACKGROUNDER NO. 5-6287
SEAN KELLY

NOVEMBER 30, 1978

CIVIL DEFENSE: BACK IN THE NEWS

ANNCR:

PRESIDENT CARTER HAS ANNOUNCED THAT HE INTENDS TO IMPROVE THE ABILITY OF THE UNITED STATES TO PROTECT ITS CITIZENS IN THE EVENT OF A NUCLEAR ATTACK. CIVIL DEFENSE IS ALSO AN IMPORTANT PROGRAM IN THE SOVIET UNION -- AS WE HEAR IN THIS BACKGROUND REPORT BY PENTAGON CORRESPONDENT SEAN KELLY:

VOICE:

THE NEW CARTER ADMINISTRATION CIVIL DEFENSE PROGRAM WAS ANNOUNCED IN EARLY NOVEMBER AND PROMPTLY DREW CRITICISM FROM A VARIETY OF SOURCES. THE WHITE HOUSE PLAN TO RELOCATE MILLIONS OF CITIZENS AWAY FROM URBAN CENTERS, IN THE EVENT OF A NATIONAL EMERGENCY, WAS DESCRIBED BY MANY AS BEING IMPRACTICAL, IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE.

SOME OBSERVERS ALSO ARGUE THAT NUCLEAR WAR IS UNTHINKABLE, AND THAT THEREFORE NO CIVIL DEFENSE PROGRAM IS NEEDED. OTHERS SAY THAT SUCH A PROGRAM WOULD DESTABILIZE U.S. RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION, AND, THAT ANYWAY, THERE CAN BE NO SURVIVAL IN A NUCLEAR WAR.

ONE OF THE LEADING U.S. EXPERTS ON CIVIL DEFENSE IS SOVIET-BORN PROFESSOR LEON GOURE (GOO-RAY) OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI'S ADVANCED INTERNATIONAL STUDIES INSTITUTE. DOCTOR GOURE HAS PUBLISHED SEVERAL BOOKS ON SOVIET CIVIL DEFENSE, BUT HE MET WITH WASHINGTON REPORTERS THIS WEEK (NOVEMBER 29TH) TO DISCUSS PRESIDENT CARTER'S NEW PROGRAM.

HE SAID HE DIDN'T THINK VERY MUCH OF THE WHITE HOUSE PLAN, BUT FOR DIFFERENT REASONS THAN OTHER CRITICS. IN HIS OPINION, IT FELL FAR SHORT OF WHAT WAS NEEDED. "THE SOVIET UNION," SAID PROFESSOR GOURE, "REGARDS CIVIL DEFENSE AS AN ESSENTIAL INTEGRAL

ELEMENT OF ITS STRATEGIC POSTURE, AS BEING A 'FACTOR OF GREAT STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE', WHICH IN A LARGE MEASURE CAN DETERMINE THE OUTCOME OF A WAR AND WHICH SIGNIFICANTLY REINFORCES THE CREDIBILITY OF SOVIET STRATEGIC DETERRENCE."

HE CALLED THE CARTER CIVIL DEFENSE PROGRAM LARGELY A PUBLIC RELATIONS EXERCISE WHICH WOULD HAVE LITXLE CREDIBILITY WITH THE SOVIETS. IN FACT, HE WASN'T CERTAIN THAT THE U.S. CONGRESS OR THE AMERICAN PUBLIC WOULD TAKE THE PROPOSED PROGRAM SERIOUSLY.

WHAT IS NEEDED, SAID THE PROFESSOR, IS MORE THAN CRISIS RELOCATION. HE URGED THAT CIVIL DEFENSE BE GIVEN A HIGHER PRIORITY BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, THAT MORE MONEY BE SPENT ON BUILDING SHELTERS, AND THAT THE PROGRAM'S DIRECTOR BE GIVEN INCREASED STATURE WITHIN THE ADMINISTRATION. HE NOTED THAT IN THE SOVIET UNION, CIVIL DEFENSE IS HEADED BY A DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENSE WHO IS A FULL MEMBER OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

HERE, HE SAID, THE JOB IS OFTEN GIVEN OUT TO POLITICIANS WHO HAVE FAILED TO GAIN OFFICE BY ELECTION. "DISASTER," SAID PROFESSOR GOURE, WHETHER NATURAL OR MAN-MADE, IS TOO SERIOUS A BUSINESS TO BE LEFT TO WELL-MEANING AMATEURS."

-0-

WJL/RD